



Knowing Jesse: A Mother's Story of Grief, Grace, and Everyday Bliss

Marianne Leone

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Jesse Cooper was an honor-roll student who loved to windsurf and write poetry. He also had severe cerebral palsy and was quadriplegic, unable to speak, and wracked by seizures. He died suddenly at age seventeen.

In fiercely honest, surprisingly funny, and sometimes heartbreakingly honest prose, Jesse's mother, Marianne Leone, chronicles her transformation by the remarkable life and untimely death of her child. An unforgettable memoir of joy, grief, and triumph, *Knowing Jesse* unlocks the secret of unconditional love and speaks to all families who strive to do right by their children.

Knowing Jesse: A Mother's Story of Grief, Grace, and Everyday Bliss Details

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Author : Marianne Leone

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From Reader Review Knowing Jesse: A Mother's Story of Grief, Grace, and Everyday Bliss for online ebook

Lindsay says

Marianne Leone is a firecracker. I hadn't really known her as an actress, nor did I know her husband, Chris Cooper. She was the keynote speaker at a conference that I attended earlier this year and I was struck by her raw emotions and the intense love she has for her son, Jesse. Her stories are heartbreakingly real, some hilarious, all very real and very easy to imagine myself in. A mother's love, a mother's grief, and the fight for equality for children with special needs.

Brandy says

Not only do I cherish this beautiful story, I spent 11 years with Jesse and his entire family. He was my teacher of unconditional love, facing fear and embracing myself. I carry part of his life and spirit in my heart, in my soul forever. My love to his family

Melissa says

Marianne Leone's son, Jesse, is born early and has a brain bleed that results in cerebral palsy. She tells her story through stories--little glimpses into her life as the mother of a severely disabled child, the struggles, the lessons, etc. The book is sprinkled with photos and Jesse's poetry, which makes the book and the stories even more real. It does not, however, EVER read as a pity party. I was nervous when I started this book, assuming I'd spend my time reading it bawling. But I didn't cry once....she's actually pretty funny. I like this woman a lot.

Megan Daily-Scott says

I never read the flap or the cover on books I'm going to read and it was a wacky surprise when I did afterwards, there are recommendations from Tom Perotta, Andre Dubus II, Denis Leary... Not run of the mill for this type of book. Jesse's dad is Chris Cooper, and that's not plastered all over the outside either which is a relief. I thought I wasn't going to be able to stand reading this but I ended up riveted by it, the author really put herself out there without trying to gloss over anything, and the section that deals with the school system in Hoboken in the darker days of special ed is unbelievable.

Beth says

Recommended by Melissa McEwan at Shakesville. I was interested partially because of my connection with people with serious disabilities, including someone in my family, and partially because I'm a big fan of Jesse's dad, the actor Chris Cooper. And having read this book, I'm now a big admirer of his mom, the

author. I certainly related to her stories of frustration with medical professionals, school professionals, and general ignorant people in the world. Her stories and descriptions and emotional responses will be familiar to anyone with a disability or anyone who loves someone with a disability. The power of her story lies in her care to portray her son as a full person--no stereotypical "he was an angel/genius/perfect/supercrip" here. She loved her son and saw amazing things in him that many others didn't, but she didn't pretend he wasn't truly human as well. He was clearly an amazing kid with amazing parents. Leone has written a powerful story without falling into cliches. Bravo.

Jay says

Fierce advocate of a mom recalls the life and death of her disabled son. The respect and passion of the author for her son is tangible, and the writing is engaging as it weaves from grief to memories and back. Written in the voice of a mother, Jesse's voice comes through loud and clear in his own poetry as well as her stories. Honest and human, it challenges the injustices of disability and oppression as it recalls mistakes as well as advocacy victories.

Diana Renn says

This book gave new meaning to the word "gripping." I'll preface this by saying it's the first book I read on an e-reader; I just bought a nook. I'd already heard raves about Marianne Leone's moving tribute to her late son Jesse Cooper, what it's like to raise a child with cerebral palsy, and her efforts to advocate for his education in the public schools. I'd also heard she was a lovely writer. I looked at some free sample pages to try out my new nook, and I immediately bought the book. I couldn't put it down. I read late into the night. In the morning, I had what I believe is nook carpal tunnel syndrome from gripping the device. I'm serious. This memoir is one you want to hold close and not put down. It also makes you want to not let go of your children or other loved ones. Without sentimentality, Leone writes a compelling portrait of her son's first eighteen years, before his death from an apparent seizure. I came away feeling I knew this family, as well as their extended family of caregivers, and had a new understanding of people with physical disabilities and the fierce work their families do to advocate for their children. And the writing is gorgeous. This is by no means a typical memoir of parenting or of grief. It left me breathless. Recommend!

Marie says

Loved this book! Read my lengthy review here:
<http://mariesbookgarden.blogspot.com/...>

Gabrielle says

I met Jesse and have an abiding respect for his parents. Marianne Leone is someone I would write like if I had ferocious compassion and grace.

Jane Deaux says

See, this is why I love WRBH. I would never think to read this book on my own, but because it's on WRBH, I'm listening to it and enjoying it so much. It's really nice to hear stories and perspectives I'd never think to search out.

Casey says

I gave this book four stars because I was moved by the story of little Jesse Cooper so much that it was hard to put it down. My heart is soft for those who have to rely on others to help them through life. And I get so angry when people try to treat them as if they're stupid or don't comprehend love, emotions, good, or bad. The story took off for me right at the beginning and kept me going till the very end.

Her story is powerful and compelling and I'm glad that Jesse was on this earth for as long as he was to touch and change the lives of those around him and beyond by his story.

Rachel says

I can't say enough about this book. It is one of the most honest books I have read in quite some time. This one I can honestly recommend for parents who struggle with providing their children with the best education possible in spite of their limitations.

Kristen says

I give Thanks Marianne Leone for writing this memoir about her beautiful , creative and intelligent son. I found her story close to heart as I, myself, is living CP and work with children with disabilities who are kinda like Jesse non-verbal.

Kelly Kittel says

Lovely, well-written story. Stumbled upon this when I heard Marianne read from Knitting Yarns in Duxbury, MA with Ann Hood, had no idea who she was (actress, The Sopranos, married to actor Chris Cooper) but loved her story and persona, looked her up and found this. Thank you for letting us know your son, Marianne. I loved your sense of humor. "I am aware that I sound like a refrigerator magnet." This beautiful book cuts to the heart of what it means to be a mom, a loving, warrior mom, and cuts straight to the heart of what life is truly about.

Neionie Pulido says

This book mad me laugh, smile cry and lament with the author. It was so beautiful to see motherhood though the eyes of Mrs. Leone. It inspired me to become a special education teacher to do better for the other Jesses out there
